



# Network of Support (NoS) Pilot Information Packet

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

## Introduction

**Network of Support Pilot**



We don't fight battles alone in uniform. Don't fight them alone out of uniform!

Let those who love you most 'watch your six' as you make this transition into civilian life.

Participate in the **Network of Support** Program

 Choose VA   U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs 1


*Figure 1. NoS Informational Slide 1*




Introducing the Network of Support (NoS) Pilot Program. This is a quick and painless 2-year pilot program that can have an unusually strong, positive effect on a transitioning service member's (TSM)'s or Veteran's health, wealth, happiness, and success as they transition into civilian life. No one is going to want to pass on this one. The cost is low and the potential benefit could not be higher.

The message of the slide above is quite simple, and it should resonate with every TSM or Veteran – We don't fight battles alone. We don't do it in uniform (whether it's ensuring we all finish a run together during PT or defeating the enemy on the battlefield), and we shouldn't do it out of uniform as we strive to succeed and find health and happiness in the world.

What the Network of Support <b>IS</b> :	What the Network of Support <b>ISN'T</b> :
<p>It's a group of people you select to receive the same VA information that you receive, so they can help you learn what VA programs and opportunities are available to you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Not</b> a hassle</li> <li>• <b>Not</b> a confidentiality issue – Your personal information will not leave your Network</li> <li>• <b>Not</b> a long-term commitment</li> </ul>

1: Scan this QR code or go to the URL ([www.va.gov/network-of-support](http://www.va.gov/network-of-support)) for more detailed instructions on how to opt in  
 2: Or email [vanos.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:vanos.vbaco@va.gov) for additional information






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*Figure 2. NoS Informational Slide 2*

The NoS gives a TSM or Veteran the ability to ask up to ten close friends and family members to receive the same regular benefits newsletter that the Veteran receives. As indicated in the slide above, the purpose is to ‘let the people who care about a TSM or VET be aware of what the VA can offer - maybe they can help their TSM or Vet notice opportunities that they might have missed, or they can simply be there if the TSM or Veteran needs another informed opinion.’

It is important for everyone involved (TSMs/Veterans, and their selected network members) to know that participation in the NoS Pilot is easy and safe. This is not a hassle for anyone. TSMs/Veterans will enter their DOD ID just to ensure we don’t confuse two members who might have the same name, and their information will be protected at all times. Once your selected network members sign up, they will start to receive a VA newsletter – that is all!

## NoS Primary Access Instructions

**This is the preferred opt-in method and the one that is strongly advised. TSMs and Vets should follow these step-by-step instructions to access and opt-into the NoS Pilot.**

1. You will begin your participation in the NoS Pilot by installing the GRIT application on your mobile phone. (GRIT stands for “Get Results in Transition”). To get started, follow [this link](#) or scan this QR Code.



2. Once downloaded, enter the GRIT app, enroll, and locate the ‘Squad’ function.
3. Within the Squad function, you will see a checkbox for the Network of Support Pilot. Please check this box and enter your DOD ID, which indicates that you have personally opted-in to the Network of Support Pilot.
4. Build your Squad by adding friends and family members (i.e., names and contact information) into your personal Squad – your Network of Support group.
5. Your Squad members will receive a text message asking them if they would like to opt-in to your Network of Support.
6. Squad members who opt-in to your Network of Support will receive an emailed NoS welcome message with access to this Information Packet.
7. As members, they will begin to receive a monthly newsletter from the VA discussing the many useful benefits and resources offered by the VA to you as a Veteran.
8. By receiving the newsletter, they will be in a position to help you, their TSMs/Vets, recognize and take advantage of all the benefits you have earned through your service to our nation.

**Note.** Veterans can opt-out of the NoS Pilot Program at any time by unchecking the NoS checkbox within GRIT/Squad (Veterans only) or by unsubscribing from the newsletter via the ‘unsubscribe’ button located at the bottom of the newsletter. NoS members can opt-out of the NoS Pilot Program by unsubscribing from the newsletter via the unsubscribe button. Please note that unsubscribing from the newsletter by the Vet or NoS Member and/or by the Vet opting out of NoS via GRIT does not opt you out of the Squad. This is a separate action within the GRIT app and you can still access other GRIT functions.



## NoS Secondary Access Instructions

**This is a backup opt-in method that should be used only if the primary method (above) is not possible. If this backup method is needed, TSMs/Veterans should follow these step-by-step instructions to access and opt-in to the NoS Pilot.**

1. You will begin your participation in the NoS Pilot by navigating back to the NoS website ([www.va.gov/initiatives/network-of-support/](http://www.va.gov/initiatives/network-of-support/)) where you found this information packet.
2. The webpage contains links to download:
  - a. This document – The NoS Information Packet
  - b. The NoS Pilot Fact Sheet
  - c. The NoS Pilot Privacy Policy Statement
  - d. A template to fill out and return via email ([vanos.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:vanos.vbaco@va.gov)) to opt-in to the NoS Pilot and specify your NoS members. This PDF template is intended for use by TSMs/Veterans and any email service.
3. Use the link to download the PDF template, open it, fill it out, save it, attach it to an email, and send it to [vanos.vbaco@va.gov](mailto:vanos.vbaco@va.gov).
4. The people you select to be in your Network of Support will each receive an email asking them if they would like to opt-in to your Network of Support.
5. If they choose to opt-in, they will receive an emailed NoS welcome message with a link to this Information Packet.
6. As members of your network, they will begin receiving a monthly VA newsletter discussing the many useful benefits and resources offered by the VA to TSMs/Veterans.
7. By receiving the newsletter, they will be in a position to help you better understand and take advantage of all the benefits they have earned through their service to our nation.

**Note.** TSMs/Veterans, and their NoS members can opt-out of the NoS Pilot at any time by unsubscribing to the newsletter via the ‘unsubscribe’ button located in the newsletter.

# NoS FAQs & Answers

## General Information

### **1. What is NoS?**

- The Network of Support (NoS) is a pilot program meant to make VA benefits and resources easier to access and understand for the Veterans who earned them. It does this by encouraging the Veteran to invite up to ten close friends and family members to receive regular correspondence from the VA regarding these various benefits and programs.
- This will make it less likely that a potentially useful benefit will go unnoticed and/or unutilized by the Veteran.

### **2. What can NoS do for the Veteran?**

- It can maximize the benefits that they get from VA-provided programs.
- It facilitates supportive contact and communication with close friends and family during a possibly difficult transition to civilian life.

### **3. How is the VA NoS different from the DOD NoS program?**

- The DOD program begins when a Servicemember joins the military; the VA program begins when the Servicemember is transitioning out of the military or is already a Vet.
- This NoS Pilot is being administered by the VA and the information shared with NoS Pilot members will be VA material.
- If the Veteran already participates in the DOD NoS, they can have the same NoS support group members, but will need to re-invite them into the VA's NoS program through the GRIT application.

### **4. What information will the NoS receive while in the program?**

- The VA newsletter that NoS members will receive is the same newsletter that their Veteran gets. It contains general and specific information about benefits, resources, and programs offered by the VA available to both Veterans and Veteran family members.
- The specific material will vary month to month, but will regularly include information on education benefits, medical and mental health benefits, home loan assistance, employment assistance, support groups, and much more.

## Access and Use

### **5. Where/how does the Veteran opt-in to the program?**

- There are two methods for opting into the Pilot Program; a primary (preferred) method, and a secondary (backup) method.
- Detailed instruction for both methods are given in the sections immediately preceding these FAQs.

### **6. How is NoS different from the Squad function in GRIT?**

- Squad is a support group component of the GRIT application that the Vet can use to maintain contact with their support group. NoS simply uses Squad/GRIT as a vehicle to enable a TSM or Veteran to opt-in and manage their NoS.
- While both Squad and NoS involve inviting people into support groups, the specific intent of NoS is to disseminate VA benefits information to those support members rather than facilitate communication among Squad members, which is the main purpose of the GRIT Squad.

### **7. What does the Veteran do after they opt-in?**

- Nothing. That is the great part. Once in the program, their NoS members will receive the same regular VA newsletter that they do as a Veteran. Neither they nor their NoS are obligated to even open or read these emails, but it is the VA's hope that they will.
- The newsletter is full of useful benefits and resources information for both the Veteran and their family.

### **8. Will the Veteran or NoS members ever be contacted about their participation in this pilot program?**

- Maybe. They may be asked to participate in a survey at some point in the future. That would be the only reason they are contacted about their participation.
- Participation in that survey would be completely voluntary.

### **9. How are NoS members (i.e., those invited into the NoS by the Veteran) contacted?**

- They are contacted via text message to their mobile device to opt-in to the Pilot.
- They are contacted via a welcome message to their email address, provided by the Veteran.

### **10. How do NoS members opt-in to the Pilot?**

- The text message they receive asks the invitee to respond to the text with the number 1.

### **11. Will NoS members receive any information that the Veteran does not receive?**

- No

**12. What is required of NoS members after they join?**

- Nothing. Just like the Veteran, they will receive a regular newsletter via email or text message.
- They can read it or not, but it is the VA's hope that they will read it and talk to their TSM or Veteran about the content.

Privacy and Related Concerns

**13. Will NoS members have access to the Veteran's private information or military or VA records?**

- No. The VA takes the privacy of Veteran NoS participants very seriously.
- It is important to the VA that the Veteran understands that the only thing their NoS invitees will ever see is the same newsletter that is emailed to the Veteran.

**14. Why is the DOD ID required? Do members need to worry about confidentiality?**

- NoS PII data are protected according to VA policies and by law under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. §522 and 38 U.S.C. §5701.
- If you find this usage of your PII unacceptable, do not opt-in to NoS. The NoS will only use your DOD ID and any other NoS specific PII that you provide for three purposes:
  - To enable the association of Veteran participants with the NoS that they specify.
  - For association with demographic information that the VA has on file to aid in statistical analysis of the usage of NoS. Statistical analyses will only be reported at the aggregate level.
  - To send out a confidential survey about your opinion of the value of NoS and its ease of use.